

# Iowa Current Developments



August 2011, Iowa Current Developments  
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service  
210 Walnut Street, Room 693, Des Moines, IA 50309

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"Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service: Excellence in helping people conserve and improve our natural resources, communities and environment."

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## A Message from the: **State Conservationist**

### Happy 10th Anniversary CREP!



*Rich Sims,  
State Conservationist*

Ten years ago, then Gov. Vilsack signed an agreement with USDA authorizing the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) in Iowa.

The purpose of CREP was to establish wetlands for water quality improvement in the tile-drained regions of Iowa. These wetlands help reduce nitrogen loads and movement of other agricultural chemicals from croplands to streams and rivers.

In the last ten years 72 of these wetlands have been established within the Prairie Pothole Region. Research at Iowa State University has demonstrated that strategically sited and designed wetlands, like those established through CREP, can remove 40-90% of nitrates and over 90% of herbicides from cropland drainage waters.

In celebrating this anniversary, we are also celebrating all the good this program has achieved for natural resources in our state and downstream.

Here's to another 10 years of this successful partnership of state, federal, local and private groups working together to protect our state's natural resources.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Sims".



*Boone County CREP Wetland*

## Area 1 Students: **What I did on my Summer Internship**



*Area 1 Interns from left to right: Nicholas Williams, Helen Leavenworth, and Amanda McNees*

### **Nicholas Williams, Spencer**

This was my first summer interning with NRCS and my experience was fantastic. Learning about the different cropping systems, conservation practices, and programs were very beneficial to my experience working this summer.

I believe I received the best of both worlds working in a two county management unit. The people placed around me, who taught me, did a wonderful job at helping me obtain the knowledge needed to perform this job. I know that without them I would not have had such a great experience.

I enjoyed surveying, learning about the different grasses, learning about the soil types, and interacting with producers. This summer I was also able to drive my first GPS tractor. My whole perception has changed with how I view land. I will never forget my first summer in Iowa and I look forward to working with NRCS in the future.

### **Helen Leavenworth, Orange City**

I am a senior at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, majoring in soil science. This was my second summer as a student trainee with NRCS. In the field, I helped with performing compliance status reviews, crop residue status reviews, CRP status reviews, WRP easement monitoring, waterway inspections, and wetland restoration.

Back in the office, I worked on reconstitutions and CRP re-enrollments in Toolkit. I also received training on ProTracts certification, offsite wetland determinations, RUSLE2, P-Index, and nutrient management plans.

I spent a few days traveling to meetings and field days to learn about area soils, watershed projects, no-till, and agricultural waste management.

I enjoyed my NRCS experience this summer immensely and look forward to learning and working

more with soil and water conservation in the future.

### **Amanda McNees, Rock Rapids**

My summer experience has been great! The employees and community welcomed me in and it was nice to make all the great connections in and outside of the NRCS. I had the chance to learn a lot of new challenging things during my internship.

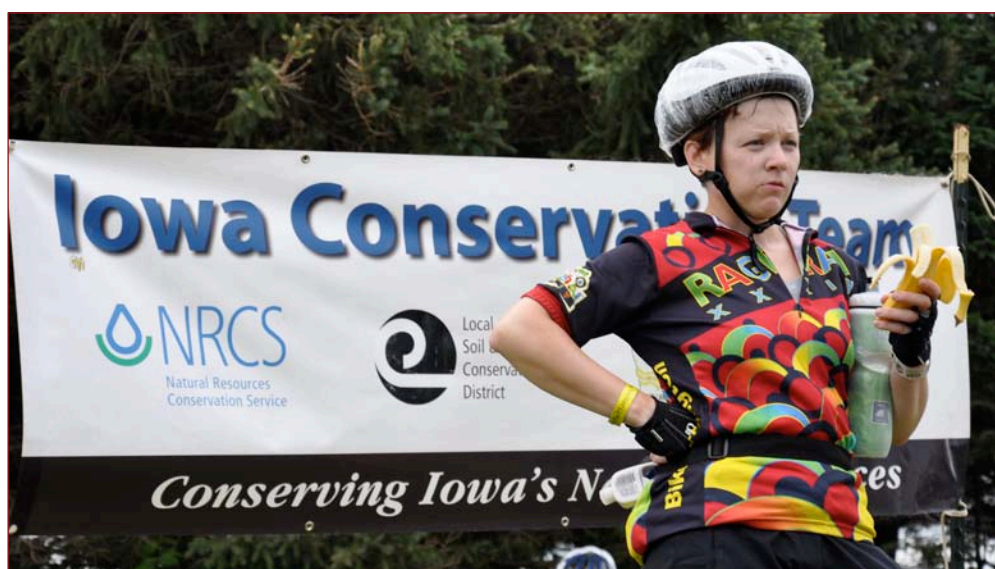
Wetlands were mainly the most I learned about from my summer experience. Coming from southern Iowa we don't deal as much with wetlands, but mostly terracing and CRP. Also, I got to learn a lot more about the usage of Toolkit and designing structures.

Even though my internship has been going on 3 months, it feels like just yesterday I was moving up here. I really have enjoyed my experience in Rock Rapids and am truly glad I was fortunate enough to experience such a great opportunity.

I would also recommend to anyone to intern with the NRCS. My past experiences with the NRCS and this experience with the NRCS have made me even more excited about pursuing a career in soil conservation.



## RAGBRAI Gallery 2011: Fun Spreading the Conservation Message



The Iowa Conservation Team wrapped up another successful RAGBRAI outreach project this July, distributing about 5,000 conservation-themed postcards and more than 2,000 pounds of bananas during the six-day effort. Volunteers from across the state helped hand out free bananas and water to thousands of riders from the US and several foreign countries. Education this year included the Iowa Learning Farms' Conservation Station, stream table

demonstration, best management practices animations and a native grass and forb plot. Tent sites included a century farm, which is the home of 96-year-old Iowa landowner "Granny". (Pictured top row left); another VIP, State Sec. of Agriculture Bill Northey is pictured with Team Flamingo in the center row, right photograph; Brian York, winner for best Popeye imitation, bottom-left.



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**Obama offers measures to help rural economies**



**View Photo Gallery** — President Obama has set out from St. Paul, Minn., on a three-day bus tour that will give him a chance to hear directly from a public frustrated with Washington even as Republican presidential hopefuls ramp up their campaigning.

*President Obama attended a rural forum in Peosta on Aug. 16. The event was covered by the Washington Post, which featured this photograph on its website. State Conservationist Richard Sims is in the front row next to FSA Executive Director John Whitaker.*

## Feed Families: Win Pizza

There are still a few days left to turn in your food donations for the Fed's Feeds Families Food Drive.



The office which collects the most food (pounds per person in the office) will win a pizza party provided by the state leaders of Rural Development, Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Iowa's nationally set goal is 17,900 pounds of food. USDA hopes to collect 500,000 pounds of food nationwide by Aug. 31.

## Whew!: Heat Relief



July was the sixth hottest on record with an average day and nighttime temperature of 75.1 degrees. The hottest July occurred in 1936 with an average temperature of 77.7.

## Cardiac Care: Calhoun and Sac Counties Get Special Training

The shared management unit of Sac and Calhoun counties decided to combine their July monthly staff meeting with some training. The NRCS staff members received CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) and AED (Automated External Defibrillation) training through the Calhoun County Public Health. The Cal-

houn County EMT's offered the training at no charge. Due to the very hot and humid weather conditions they ended up going through 3 different trainers to complete the course as they were called out on emergencies.



## Need Photos? New Images on SharePoint

Public Affairs recently added 140 new images in 20 categories to the Iowa NRCS Photogallery on the Iowa NRCS SharePoint page. Images feature Prescribed Grazing, No-till, Technology, Hoop Buildings, High Tunnels, Planting, and Streambank Stabilization. These are all high resolution images for you to

use as needed. Each category includes a "Thumbnails" page for quick browsing. Sample images are below. If you need help with the photogallery please contact Jason Johnson or Laura Greiner at 515-282-4262.



## Conservation Conversations: On the Prairie

About 100 conservation-minded people met to network and explore new partnerships at Harold and Kay Whipple's Bluebird Family Farm in Warren County on July 19. Tours of established prairies and wildlife habitat preceded an informal, working meal, where small groups discussed water and soil quality issues and envisioned what they wanted those resources to look like in 25 years. Activities were sponsored by Harold and Kay, the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Iowa Learning Farms. A clip about the tour is at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7Z\\_3kCtOh4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7Z_3kCtOh4).



Assistant State Conservationist for Operations Jon Hubbert (far right) participates in the prairie walking tour at Harold and Kay Whipple's Bluebird Family Farm. Photo and story by Lynn Betts, retired NRCS State Public Affairs Specialist.



## Iowa Adventures: Group Sponsors Student Trip To Amusement Park



The Iowa Chapter of the National Organization of Professional Black NRCS Employees sponsored admission for summer students to Adventureland on July 30. Lya Williams hosted many of them in her home. The event was open to anyone interested in attending.

In the photo: Helen Leavenworth (Student, Orange City), Corey Harris (Student, Waterloo), Lya Williams (Treasurer, Iowa Organization), Robyn Wilson (Student, Clarinda), Jaia Fischer (BEP, member of Iowa Organization), Stephanie Hill (President, Iowa Organization) Not pictured: Rob Lawson (D/VEPM) and John Callaway (Student, Williamsburg).

## Wicked Winds: Damaged Crops and Property



A strong thunderstorm complex moved through east central Iowa early July 11. Damaging winds exceeded 100 mph at times and uprooted large trees, downed power lines, damaged crops and ripped roofs off of buildings. Portions of northern Tama, northern Benton, and northwestern Linn County were hardest hit. National Weather Service storm survey teams assessed estimated wind speeds up to 130 mph in these hardest hit areas. Photos: Damaged corn and grain bin in Tama County; Damage at the Vinton Field Office: Boards provide support for sagging ceiling because of roof damage (top); insulation is plastered on the outside of the damaged building.



## Changes In: NRCS Personnel

Name	Official Title	Grade	Nature of Action	Effective Date	Location
Addy, Shari Ann	Soil Conservationist	07	Voluntary Retirement	7/31/11	Harlan
Adkins, Marty	State Resource Conservationist	13	Reassignment	7/3/11	State Office
Appelgate, Linda	RC&D Coordinator	12	Voluntary Retirement	6/30/11	Ankeny RC&D Office
Clothier, Jill	HR Assistant	07	Promotion	7/31/11	State Office
Delang, Drew	District Conservationist	12	Promotion	7/17/11	Wapello
Dubendorf, Jennifer	Management Analyst	12	Promotion	7/17/11	State Office
Ehley, Alan	Soil Conservationist	12	Voluntary Retirement	7/30/11	State Office
Everts, James	Soil Conservation Technician	06	Voluntary Retirement	7/30/11	Grundy Center
Fehseke, Mark	District Conservationist	12	Reassignment	7/3/11	Corydon
Guffey, Dora	Resource Conservationist	11	Reassignment	8/14/11	Nevada
Hoelt, Kurtis	District Conservationist	12	Reassignment	7/31/11	Cresco
Lange, Alan	District Conservationist	11	Promotion	7/31/11	Greenfield
Mathis, Todd	District Conservationist	12	Promotion	7/17/11	Donnellson
Matz, Jonathan	District Conservationist	12	Promotion	7/17/11	Tipton
Moser, Robert	Resource Conservationist	11	Reassignment	7/3/11	Estherville
Myers, John	State Resource Conservationist	13	Voluntary Retirement	7/2/11	State Office
Osborn, Scott	District Conservationist	11	Voluntary Retirement	2/27/11	Primghar
Schutt, Mark	District Conservationist	11	Reassignment	7/17/11	Spirit Lake
Sucik, Michael	HQ Employee	14	Promotion	7/29/11	Ames

## Changes In: **DSC Personnel**

Name	Official Title	Nature of Action	Location
Fynaardt, Karen	Administrative Assistant to the Director	Transfer to DNR	State Office
Gipp, Chuck	DSC Director	Transfer to DNR	State Office
Riley, Stacy	Secretary	Left DSC	Winneshiek/ Allamakee SWCDs

## Special Accommodations: **Why They Are Important**

Policy dictates that all NRCS meetings, conferences, seminars and training programs, held either in public or private facilities, must be accessible to participants and employees with disabilities. Accessibility means access both to facilities and to programs and services so that individuals with sensory and mobility disabilities can participate in meetings, conferences, seminars and training programs.

All meetings conducted by NRCS solely, or as a partner, must be held in accessible locations. If not, NRCS should not attend, and it should be stated why the agency will not be represented.

Policy also states that all announcements for public meetings conducted by the USDA-NRCS or partners will include instructions for participants needing accommodations in order for them to attend and fully participate in the event.

Here is the recommended text to use in meeting announcements: "If you need accommodation, please notify (insert name of meeting organizer) by (insert date) by calling (meeting organizer phone number)."

A potential participant in a Women's Landowner Tour in East Pot-

tawattamie County had concerns about access to a trolley used for the tour. The participant needed a temporary ramp in order to physically board the trolley.

Physical accessibility assistance is just one example of accommodations. Others include but are not limited to sign language interpreters, Braille, large print or alternative print formats, and special dietary requirements (if food is provided).

For more information please reference: (Expired IA Bulletin: 230-9-8) and the General Manual Title 230, Part 401, Subpart C.

## Have a story idea for Current Developments?

Email your item to Laura Greiner, State Public Affairs Specialist, at [laura.greiner@ia.usda.gov](mailto:laura.greiner@ia.usda.gov). Current Developments is published six times a year.



*Deer seeking any high ground during the early days of massive flooding along the Missouri River in western Iowa.*